



Backpacking @ Ten Mile River Scout Camp

Presented by Sean Johnson

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Introduction

- Bronx Eagle Scout, Troop 145
- President, American Pool of New York
- Volunteer as the Weekend Ranger in the Fall & Winter Month for last couple of years
- Lou Farragher - TMR Ranger got me involved
- Obsession with TMR Trail as a youth led to an even greater obsession as an adult
- Began project with the assistance of David Malatzky to revise map of TMR along with my canine assistant in 2016
- Co-Chair of the Newly Founded TMR Trail Committee



Backpacking – Advantages to TMR

- “Traveling for multiple days carrying everything you need in your pack.”
- 12,000 acres only a few hours from New York City
- Incredible Resource
- TMR is roughly the size & shape of Manhattan Island
- Can plan up to a 2, 3, 4 or even 5 day trip, completely on TMR property
- Great character / team building experience





Leading a Backpacking Trip

- Several Parts
 - Leadership Requirements
 - Route Planning
 - Weather Considerations
 - Gear
 - Reservations w/ Council
 - Arrival @ TMR
 - During Trip
 - After Trip Report

Leadership Requirements

- BSA Regulations
 - Two Deep Leadership - one over age 21
- Practical Considerations
 - Ideally - two adults per 8 scouts
 - Fitness Level of Adults and Scouts
 - Do not be ambitious for your 1st trip
 - A trip that is less challenging but enjoyable is always going to be better than a long trip that is grueling



How to Start With Zero Experience

- Start Small

- 1st Trip - Simple “Point to Point” with support adults and day packs
- 2nd Trip - Overnight Loop Hike with standard backpacking gear and support adults
- 3rd Trip - Multiple nights with everything required in the backpacks
- All three trips can be planned and executed completely on Ten Mile River property without redoing any part of a prior trip





1st Step – How to Hike With Scouts

- Adult in the front of the group
- Adult in the back of the group
- Upon departure in the morning, have your scouts line up and give each a number. When stopping for breaks, have each scout call out his number in order to make sure you have everyone with you.
- Be mindful if the hike can provide an opportunity for advancement - several of the requirements for the first three ranks are hiking specific.
- **STAY TOGETHER** - prior to BSA ownership of Ten Mile River, the property was heavily lumbered. Lumber totes and firebreaks can be found all over and can easily be mistaken for trails.
- **WATCH THE MARKERS** - We have done our best at TMR to place a marker every 50' feet or so - but trees have a way of falling down which can obscure the trail. The trails at TMR are not heavily used. You should only proceed forward when the next marker is in sight.
- **WHEN YOU LOSE THE TRAIL** - Remember to stay together. It is essential for an adult to stay in the front to make sure your troop stays on the marked trail. Also remember the trail is marked in both directions, if you do not see a marker in front of you you will probably see one headed in the opposite direction.

Your Very First Expedition

- **Keep it simple your 1st trip !** Best way to start is with a simple overnight:
 - Simple “Point-to-Point” hike, HQ to Arch Bridge (heading clockwise)
 - Sample Troop:
 - 4 Adult Leaders, 2 go on the hike w/ the youth, the other two stay behind to provide support
 - 12 Youth Members
 - Arrive at TMR on Friday evening
 - Stay at HQ Leantos on Friday night
 - Easy Access, right off of CR 26
 - Wake up early Saturday AM
 - Depart via the TMR Trail, headed to Arch Bridge
 - Overnight gear transported by support adults
 - About 10 miles total



But what about the Backpack ?!

- There is no activity in the world that people underestimate more than backpacking. Much more physically demanding than you'd expect

- Start with a super easy trip to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable experience

- My suggested route visits three scenic spots:

- Davis Lake
- Indian Cliffs
- Stone Arch Bridge

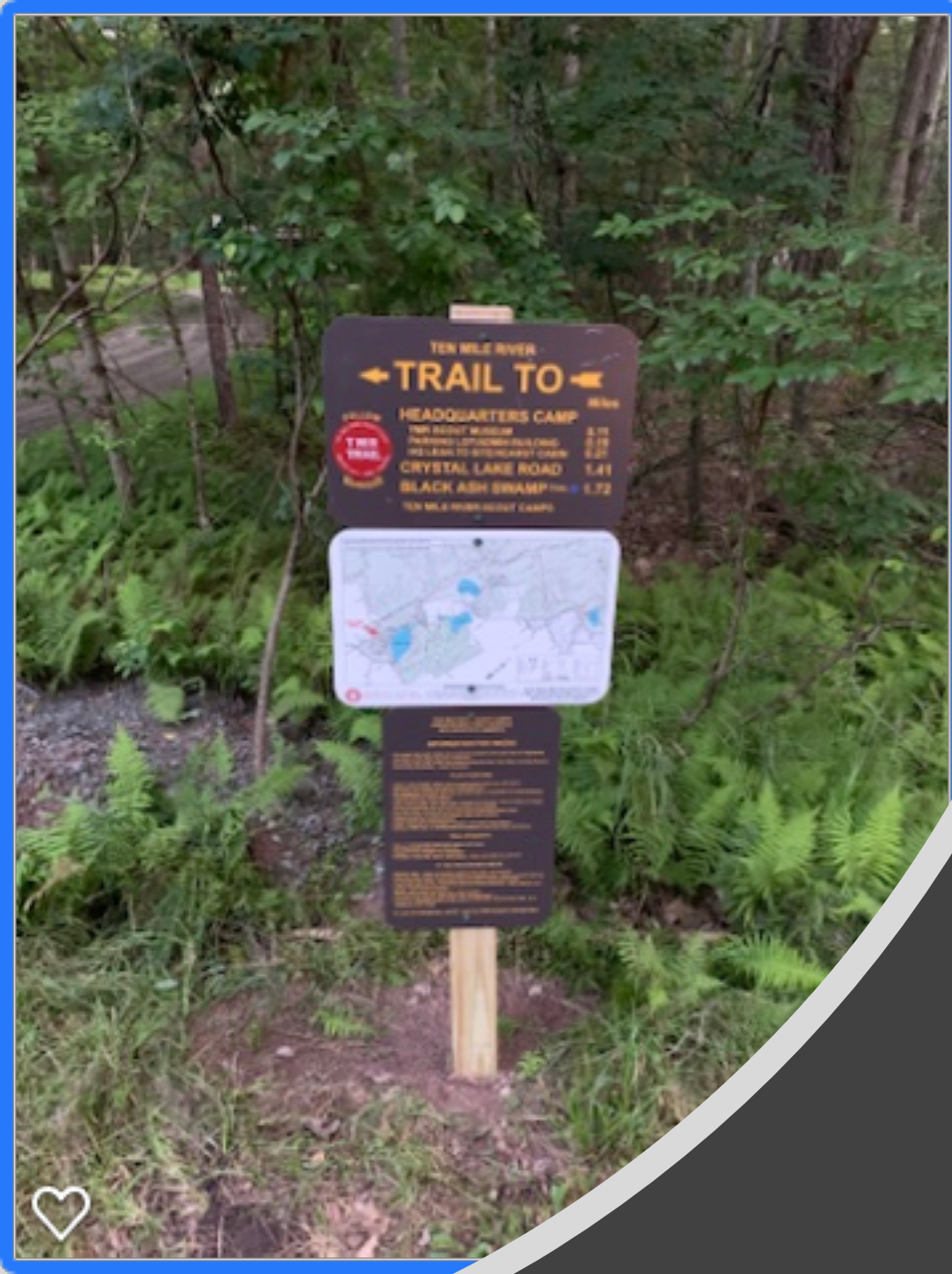
- Mileage is reasonable (10 mi), little elevation gain

- Many points at which a support adults can pick up less enthusiastic scouts

- Lunch can be carried by scouts or delivered by support adults

- Gear requirements are minimal and little investment required

- Depart from Arch Bridge Sunday morning



•For this first trip scouts would bring along on the trail a day pack with:

- Poncho
- Flashlight
- Map of the route
- Snacks
- Water
- Sweatshirt / Extra Socks

•Adult Leaders would also carry a first aid kit, smartphone with Avenza Maps & a backup battery

•Support Adults would transport overnight gear from HQ to Arch Bridge and be available for extraction of those not able to complete the hike

•Just about any hang-up can be solved by support adults

Gear Requirements for 1st Expedition





2nd Expedition – Overnight Loop

- Still makes use of support adults
- Overnight carried by the scout, including food
- Friday Night - Trout Pond
 - Easy access from Crystal Lake Road
- Saturday - TMR Trail (counter - clockwise) through Camp Keowa. Overnight along TMR Trail @ seasonal site inside Camp Ranachqua or Beaver Pond
- Early Sunday morning - extraction via support adults outside Camp Ranachqua or walk back to Trout Pond via camp roads
- Saturday Hiking Distance - about 8 ½ mi
- Sunday Hiking Distance - about 3 mi
- Hike is more difficult with added weight of packs
- Area of TMR north of Camp Keowa is very remote, will give participants a true wilderness experience



Gear Considerations for the 2nd Expedition

- Scouts will carry their overnight gear with them this time around
- In addition to normal Scout trip gear, backpacking specific gear is also required:
 - Backpacking stove and cookware
 - Backpacking specific sleeping bag & mattress pad
 - Internal or external frame pack
 - Boots made specifically for hiking, preferably lined with GORE TEX or similar waterproof membrane
 - Bear proof food storage can
- Preparation is essential, but if something is missed the risk is mitigated somewhat by support adults.

3rd Expedition – Multi Day Trip – 3 Day Weekend

- **Friday Night** - Begin @ Davis Lake Gate Number 1 and spend night at Davis Lake South
- **Saturday Day** - Hike from Davis Lake South to Split Rock
- **Saturday Evening** - Overnight @ Split Rock.
- **Sunday Day** - Hike from Split Rock to Camp Ranachqua.
- **Sunday Evening** - Overnight @ Camp Ranachqua
- **Monday AM** - Extraction at Camp Ranachqua via car shuttle.
- Total Distance - 18 ½ mi.
- All gear carried by scouts with support adults being optional.
- TMR Ranger support always available



Weather Considerations

- TMR is about 15 degrees cooler than the city at all times of the year.
- I have seen it snow as early as Halloween (October 31st) and as late as April 30th. It can drop below zero as early as Thanksgiving.
- Avoid trips in very early spring (March). Some of the seemingly pleasant stream crossings we have in the summer can turn into raging torrents in the spring due to the melting snowpack.
- In the late spring and early Fall, keep an eye out for severe thunderstorms.
- No one gets hurt by taking the safest option when it comes to weather.



A person with a beard, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and khaki pants, is sitting on the grassy bank of a stream. They are using a manual water filter pump to filter water from the stream into a white plastic jug. The water is dark and murky, and there are some green plants in the water. The person's hands are visible, holding the pump and the jug. The background shows the stream and some rocks.

Water Sources

- All water at Ten Mile River - whether you get it from a stream, lake, spring or well pump - should be run through a backpacking specific water filter and boiled.
- Water can be cached at the overnight sites on Friday afternoon or provided by supporting adults. All water obtained from the HQ area and cabins throughout the property is pre-treated and is safe to drink.

Wildlife

- No shortage of wildlife at Ten Mile River
- I have seen more animals on a single backpacking trip on TMR property than I have seen on all of my other trips combined.
- Use bear-proof canisters or bear bags for food and all toiletries when staying out on the trail. If using bags, be sure to tie the bag completely shut or you might get a visit from my friend on the left.
- Do not allow feeding of the bears or other animals by curious scouts. Many bears do not have the same fear of humans at Ten Mile River that they do at more far flung locations, but will still avoid humans at all costs. You usually will only see bears running away.



Volunteer Opportunities

- Our new TMR Trail Committee is looking for adult members to assist with trail maintenance
- You can combine a day hike with a few hours of service clearing a section of the TMR Trail for a great troop weekend trip
- Please see me for details - we currently have a good amount of people already participating
- We will supply all of the equipment
- Work does not involve chainsaws

